



The State of New Hampshire  
*Department of Environmental Services*



February 13, 2007

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman  
Senate Energy, Environment and Economic Development Committee  
Room 103, Legislative Office Building  
Concord, NH 03301

**Re: SB 68, relative to making an appropriation to the Department of Environmental Services to implement the New Hampshire Estuaries Project's comprehensive conservation and management plan**

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 68, which would make an appropriation to partially fund the implementation of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (the Comprehensive Plan). The Department of Environmental Services (DES) takes no position on whether the proposed appropriation should be enacted by the Legislature. However, we strongly support the purpose of this bill, which is to maintain effective long term implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

DES is an important partner to the NHEP. We actively participated in the development of the Comprehensive Plan and continue to contribute directly to its implementation. Funds are needed to support important elements of the Comprehensive Plan, including community assistance grants and water quality monitoring efforts. NHEP community assistance grants have enabled many coastal communities to comply with federal storm water regulations, protect important conservation lands, and update local regulations for natural resource protection. NHEP funding has also supported numerous water quality monitoring and environmental assessment activities that provide critical data that DES and others use to assess the estuaries and to fulfill Clean Water Act assessment requirements. These efforts contribute positively to the long term health of New Hampshire's estuaries and coastal watershed.

In 2002, the NHEP developed a coordinated monitoring program. This initiative has provided a means to compile and understand critical long term data on the state of our estuaries. Dozens of organizations, including DES, other state agencies, and the University of New Hampshire contribute data to this monitoring program, with primary funding from a variety of sources and additional support from NHEP to fill critical funding gaps. Unfortunately, many of the federal funding sources for specific monitoring programs are in decline. Without good continuous monitoring data, our long term understanding of key environmental indicators, such as provided in NHEP's State of the Estuaries Reports, the most recent of which was published in 2006, will be less complete.

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In conclusion, DES is fully committed to continuance of an effective New Hampshire Estuaries Program and supports efforts by NHEP to establish stable, long-term funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Paul Currier at 271-3289 or me at 271-3449.

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Burack  
Commissioner

cc: Senator Margaret W Hassan  
Senator Iris W Estabrook  
Senator Martha Fuller Clark  
Senator Jacalyn L Cilley  
Senator John S Barnes  
Representative Nancy F Stiles  
Representative Dennis F Abbott  
Representative Elisabeth N Sanders  
Representative Judith T Spang  
Jennifer Hunter, New Hampshire Estuaries Project